

SCREENING FORM FOR LOW-EFFECT HCP DETERMINATIONS

I. Project Information

A. Project name: Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Endangered Mount Hermon June Beetle for APN 063-061-28, site of a new, single-family home on Alta Vista Way next to 1055 Martin Road in Bonny Doon (Santa Cruz County), California.

B. Covered species: Mount Hermon June beetle (*Polyphylla barbata*)

C. Project size (in stream miles and acres): Construction of a new single-family home, garage, and associated landscaping/infrastructure is proposed in a previously disturbed portion of a 14.9-acre parcel legally described as APN 063-061-28. Project implementation would result in the disturbance of 0.0625-acre (2,720 square feet; sf) of Mount Hermon June beetle habitat.

D. Brief project description including minimization and mitigation plans: Mr. Steven Sohl (hereafter, the applicant) is seeking an incidental take permit to authorize take of the Mount Hermon June beetle associated with the construction of a new, single-family residence, garage, and associated landscaping/infrastructure on an existing legal parcel located in the community of Bonny Doon, Santa Cruz County, California. The parcel is currently undeveloped land currently zoned as rural-residential. Adjacent land uses include other rural-residential development.

The applicant requests a 5-year permit term. The permit would be renewable, if needed. Project implementation could result in take of Mount Hermon June beetles living in the 0.0625-acre area. Approximately 0.0443-acre (1,926 sf) would be permanently lost to allow for the new residence, garage, necessary infrastructure, and associated landscaping. Approximately 0.018-acre (794 sf) would be temporarily disturbed to accommodate installation of pipelines and the work zone surrounding the new home and garage. The Mount Hermon June beetle may recolonize the temporarily disturbed portions of the project area.

Due to the limited project footprint and its location within predominantly disturbed habitat, project implementation is anticipated to have minor impacts on the biological function of the Zayante Sandhills. The proposed project area is of marginal long-term conservation value for the Mount Hermon June beetle and, as such, is not expected to affect species persistence or recovery.

The conservation strategy outlined in the HCP includes the following measures to avoid and minimize take of the Mount Hermon June beetle:

1. Siting of the project footprint in an already degraded portion of the property;
2. Minimize removal of plant species indigenous to the Zayante Sandhills region;
3. Restrict construction to that period outside of the flight season for Mount Hermon June beetle (considered to be May to October, annually), if possible. If construction

activities must occur during the flight season, erosion-control fabric would be used to cover exposed soils to prevent individual beetles from burrowing into the soil;

4. Revegetation of those areas temporarily disturbed with plant species indigenous to the Zayante Sandhills;
5. A Service-approved entomologist would monitor any soil-disturbing construction activities to identify, capture, and relocate Mount Hermon June beetle larvae out of harm's way into nearby suitable habitat.
6. Use of outdoor night lighting on the new residence and garage would employ only light bulbs certified not to attract nocturnally active insects in order to minimize disruption of Mount Hermon June beetle breeding behavior during the adult flight season.

To mitigate for unavoidable take of Mount Herman June beetle associated with both the temporary and permanent loss of habitat, the applicant will purchase 0.0625 acre of conservation credits (1:1 ratio impact to conservation) in the Zayante Sandhills Conservation Bank. This conservation bank conserves, manages, and monitors large areas of high-quality Sandhills habitat with high conservation value to the Mount Hermon June beetle, as well as other sensitive Sandhills species. Purchase of the conservation credits will be prior to the commencement of any project activities that could result in take of Mount Hermon June beetle (e.g., soil disturbance, vegetation clearing).

The applicant also commits to fund all elements of the proposed conservation strategy, including compliance and effects monitoring. Monitoring results will be provided in reports to the Service.

II. Does the HCP fit the following low-effect criteria?

A. Are the effects of the HCP minor or negligible on federally listed, proposed, or candidate species and their habitats covered under the HCP prior to implementation of the minimization and mitigation measures? Yes, project implementation would disturb only 0.0625-acre of previously degraded Mount Hermon June beetle habitat. As such, we anticipate that project effects on the Mount Hermon June beetle would be both minor and negligible.

B. Are the effects of the HCP minor or negligible on other environmental values or resources (e.g. air quality, geology and soils, water quality and quantity, socio-economic, cultural resources, recreation, visual resources, etc.) prior to implementation of the minimization and mitigation measures? Yes. The proposed project is the construction of a single-family residence, garage, and associated landscaping/infrastructure on an existing, legal parcel. We do not anticipate that project implementation would result in significant effects to the human environment.

C. Would the impacts of this HCP, considered together with the impacts of other past, present and reasonably foreseeable similarly situated projects not result, over time, in cumulative effects to environmental values or resources that would be considered

significant? As discussed previously, the proposed project consists of the construction of a single-family residence, garage, and associated landscaping/infrastructure on an existing, legal parcel. Significant cumulative effects on the Mount Hermon June beetle or communities of the Zayante Sandhills are not anticipated to occur in the foreseeable future. The County of Santa Cruz Sensitive Habitat Ordinance limits development on parcels located within the Sandhills; construction of this new single-family home at this property will not induce further development. As such, we anticipate that project implementation would not result in significant cumulative effects to environmental values or resources.

III. Do any of the exceptions to categorical exclusions apply to this HCP? (form 516 DM 2.3, Appendix 2)

Would implementation of the HCP:

A. Have significant adverse effects on public health or safety? No. The HCP supports the issuance of an ITP for Mount Hermon June beetle associated with the construction of a single-family residence, garage, and associated landscaping/infrastructure on an existing legal parcel in an area of similar uses. No hazardous materials are known to be involved.

B. Have adverse effects on such unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources, park, recreation or refuge lands, wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers, sole or principal drinking water aquifers, prime farmlands, wetlands, floodplains, or ecologically significant or critical areas, including those listed on the Department's National Register of Natural Landmarks? No. The project is sited in a residentially zoned area that has been developed to similar uses since the early 1900s. The parcel does not support prime farmland, sole or principal aquifers, wetlands, or floodplains and so no wild and scenic rivers, refuge lands, wilderness areas, parks, or recreation opportunities will be affected. Although located on Zayante soils that elsewhere support ecologically sensitive Sandhills communities, the project has been located in previously degraded habitat dominated by nonnative plant species.

C. Have highly controversial environmental effects? No. The project is consistent with County of Santa Cruz zoning laws, ordinances, regulations, and policies and consistent with surrounding developed uses. As such, we do not anticipate any controversial environmental effects.

D. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks? No. The project is limited in size and scope. Only a single residence, garage, and associated landscaping/infrastructure would be constructed on a small portion (0.0625-acre) of a 14.9-acre property. We do not anticipate that this would result in uncertain effects or unknown risks.

E. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects? No. As previously stated, the

project is limited in size and scope. The development would occur on an existing, legal parcel. As such, we do not anticipate that it would establish a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions that will potentially cause significant environmental effects.

F. Be directly related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects? No. This is a single action not related to any other. We are not aware of any future actions directly related to the HCP; therefore, do not anticipate any significant cumulative effects.

G. Have adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places? No. The property is currently undeveloped; there are no existing structures. A search of the National Register of Historic Places (<http://www.cr.nps.gov/places.htm>) revealed no cultural or historic sites listed or eligible for listing within the project area.

H. Have adverse effects on listed or proposed species, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species? This project will result in soil disturbance of 0.0625-acre of Zayante sands presumed occupied by the Mount Hermon June beetle. Removal of this small area of degraded habitat is anticipated to have a negligible effect on the long-term persistence of the Mount Hermon June beetle in the area and recovery of the species overall. There is no critical habitat designated for the Mount Hermon June so there will be no adverse effects.

I. Have adverse effects on wetlands, floodplains or be considered a water development project thus requiring compliance with either Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act? No. The site is comprised wholly of terrestrial, upland habitat. There are no wetlands or floodplains onsite. The project is not a water development project.

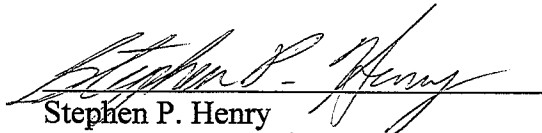
J. Threaten to violate a Federal, State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment? No. The HCP supports the issuance of an ITP that would authorize take of Mount Hermon June beetle incidental to otherwise lawful activities. This project will be subject to California Environmental Quality Act review pursuant to the County of Santa Cruz's implementing guidelines and other Federal, State, and local environmental laws and requirements. The proposed project does not take place on tribal land and, as such, there is no tribal involvement.

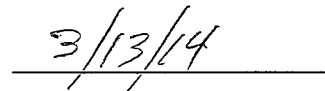
IV. ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION STATEMENT

Based on the analysis above, the HCP for the proposed Sohl single-family residence qualifies for a categorical exclusion as defined in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service *Habitat Conservation Planning Handbook*. Therefore, this action is categorically excluded from further NEPA documentation as provided by 516 DM 2, Appendix 1 and 516 DM 6, Appendix 1.

Other supporting documents: Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Endangered Mount Hermon June Beetle for APN 063-061-28, site of a new, single-family home on Alta Vista Way next to 1055 Martin Road in Bonny Doon (Santa Cruz County), California. January 2014.

Concurrence:


Stephen P. Henry
Acting Field Supervisor


Date